WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for preparing an implantation space in a vertebra of the human spine, the method comprising the steps of:

positioning one end of a hollow guard in contact with the exterior surface of at least one vertebra, the one end of the guard having a height;

forming, through the hollow guard, an opening into the vertebra; and

inserting, through the hollow guard and into the opening, an implantation material suitable for human implantation of sufficient strength to support the bone of the vertebra, the implantation material rigidly stabilizing the implantation space occupied by the implantation material, the method being performed without altering the height of the one end of the guard between the forming step and the inserting step.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the forming step includes the sub-step of inserting an instrument through the guard to access the bone of the vertebra.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the forming step includes the sub-step of milling the vertebra.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the forming step includes the sub-step of drilling the vertebra.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of inserting a drill into the guard to access the vertebra with the drill.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the inserting step includes inserting the implantation material comprising a biomaterial into the opening through the hollow guard.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the inserting step includes inserting the implantation material comprising a fusion-promoting substance.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of inserting an inner sleeve within the guard.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is performed without removing the hollow guard between the positioning step and the inserting step.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the inserting step includes the sub-step of inserting an implant having at least upper and lower portions that are arcuate along at least a portion of the length of the implant.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the inserting step includes the sub-step of inserting the implant further comprising a hollow interior between the upper and lower arcuate portions of the implant for holding bone growth promoting material, each of the upper and lower portions of the implant having at least one opening in communication with the hollow interior to permit bone from the vertebra to grow through the implant.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of loading the hollow interior of the implant with fusion promoting substances.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the loading step includes the sub-step of loading the hollow interior of the implant with bone.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the inserting step includes inserting the implantation material that comprises at least in part of an implantation material other than bone.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the inserting step includes the sub-step of inserting an implant having the upper and lower portions having at least one protrusion on the upper and lower portions for engaging the vertebra.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the protrusion is at least a portion of a thread.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the inserting step includes the sub-step of inserting an implant having a hollow interior and at least one of an insertion end and a trailing end that is open and adapted for loading bone growth promoting substances into the hollow interior.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of engaging an end cap for closing the open end of the implant.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein the inserting step includes the sub-step of inserting an implant having an insertion end and a trailing end, the trailing end being adapted to cooperatively engage a driver for inserting the implant through the hollow guard and into the opening.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein the positioning step includes the step of engaging the one end of the hollow guard to the vertebra.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the positioning step includes the sub-step of positioning the guard that is a tubular sleeve that is at least in part hollow.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein the positioning step includes the sub-step of positioning the guard having a length defined by a distal portion and a proximal portion forming the length, the guard having a substantially uniform cross section along its distal portion.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein the positioning step includes the sub-step of positioning the guard having a substantially uniform cross section along its length.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the one end of the guard has a cross sectional configuration substantially the same as the substantially uniform cross section of the guard.

25. The method of claim 1, wherein the positioning step includes the sub-step of positioning the guard having the one end having a circumference that is uninterrupted and constant.

26. The method of claim 25, further comprising projections extending from the uninterrupted and constant circumference of the one end of the guard for engaging the spine.

27. The method of claim 1, wherein the forming step includes the sub-step of forming an opening having arcuate portions.

28. The method of claim 1, wherein the forming step includes the sub-step of forming an opening that is generally cylindrical.

29. The method of claim 1, wherein the positioning step includes the step of positioning the one end of the guard in contact with the vertebra of the posterior lumbar spine.

30. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of placing compressed biomaterial into the implantation space.

31. A method for preparing a vertebra of the human spine, comprising the steps of:

positioning one end of a guard onto the exterior surface of the vertebra, the one end of the guard having a height;

forming, through the guard, an opening at least in part into the vertebra; and

inserting a biomaterial into the opening through the guard, the method being performed without altering the height of the one end of the guard between the forming step and the inserting step.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the forming step includes the sub-step of inserting an instrument through the guard to access the bone of the vertebra.

33. The method of claim 31, wherein the forming step includes the sub-step of milling the vertebra.

34. The method of claim 31, wherein the forming step includes the sub-step of drilling the vertebra.

35. The method of claim 31, further comprising the step of inserting a drill into the guard to access the vertebra with the drill.

36. The method of claim 31, wherein the biomaterial comprises a fusion-promoting substance.

37. The method of claim 31, wherein the biomaterial comprises bone.

38. The method of claim 31, wherein the biomaterial comprises a material other than bone.

39. The method of claim 31, further comprising the step of inserting an inner sleeve within the guard.

40. The method of claim 31, wherein the method is performed without removing the hollow guard between the positioning step and the inserting step.

41. The method of claim 31, wherein the forming step includes the sub-step of forming an opening having arcuate portions.

42. The method of claim 31, wherein the forming step includes the sub-step of forming an opening that is generally cylindrical.

43. The method of claim 31, wherein the positioning step includes the step of engaging the one end of the hollow guard to the vertebra.

44. The method of claim 31, wherein the positioning step includes the sub-step of positioning the guard having projections projecting distally from the one end for penetrably engaging the posterior surface of the vertebra.

45. The method of claim 31, wherein the positioning step includes the sub-step of positioning the guard that is a tubular sleeve that is at least in part hollow.

46. The method of claim 31, wherein the positioning step includes the sub-step of positioning the guard having a length defined by a distal portion and a proximal portion forming the length, the guard having a substantially uniform cross section along its distal portion.

47. The method of claim 31, wherein the positioning step includes the sub-step of positioning the guard having a substantially uniform cross section along its length.

48. The method of claim 47, wherein the one end of the guard has a cross sectional configuration substantially the same as the substantially uniform cross section of the guard.

49. The method of claim 31, wherein the positioning step includes the sub-step of positioning the guard having the one end having a circumference that is uninterrupted and constant.

50. The method of claim 49, further comprising projections extending from the uninterrupted and constant circumference of the one end of the guard for engaging the spine.

51. The method of claim 31, wherein the positioning step includes the step of positioning the one end of the guard in contact with the vertebra of the posterior lumbar spine.

52. The method of claim 31, wherein the inserting step includes placing compressed biomaterial into the opening.